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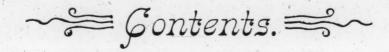
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Published Monthly in the Interests of the Cal.
California Medical College.
Editor's Hours, 10 to 12 Daily.

Entered at the San Francisco Post Office as Second-Class Matter.



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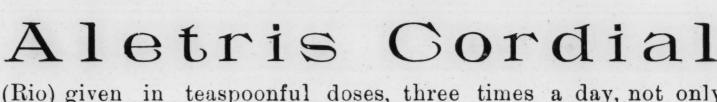
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# California Medical Journal.

Vol. xxIII.

DECEMBER, 1902.

No. 12.

# Circumcision—A Consideration of the Subject, With New Methods of Treatment of the Infant and Adult,

S. F. LONG, M. D., SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

THE INFANT.

**PROM** the earliest records of civilization to the present time, men in all pursuits of life have been known to differ with each other, which fact I take for granted is productive of greater or more enlightened work along the lines of social and intellectual development. The subject under consideration is no exception to this rule, and, as a result, we find an abundance of literature and individual opinion as a legacy to the twentieth century practitioners. Many theories have been advanced and ideas expressed as to the advisability or method of operating, and the voluminous literature on this subject shows that much thought has been expended to convince the people that some form of treatment is necessary. The fact that one representative class of people has practiced infant circumcision for ages, has

been regarded by many as convincing proof of its efficacy. To the modern practitioner it matters not whether treatment should be rendered to the infant or child, except for health and cleanliness alone.

Omitting the history and details of the various methods suggested and practiced up to the present time, I will proceed to give you what seems to me the most rational consideration of the subject, and what I have put into practice during the past five years.

Every adult male should have the glans penis perfectly uncovered and free from any foreskin, simply to be clean and healthy. To accomplish this every male child should be properly treated during infancy or early child-hood. I am convinced that the foreskin is a wise provision of nature, and its removal by any operation on the

infant or child is entirely unnecessary. Years of observation have taught most practitioners that every male child is born with a long and more or less contracted prepuce, and a majority of these are adherent to the glans penis. As a result of the "let nature take its course" plan, the child passes through its babyhood and childhood, and if no serious complications have arisen during this time in the way of balanitis, caused by the accumulated smegma, which invariably exists, or some serious nervous affection, the result of onanism, or a paraphymosis necessitating an operation, it, is probable that the boy will arrive at manhood with his long and nasty foreskin still contracted, and painful on the least attempt at pushing it back, and thus it remains all the days of his life except for the surgeon's knife.

This is a natural result owing to the following conditions: With a prepuce contracted and adherent to the glans it cannot push its way through, as the resistance at this point is greater than the resistance of the skin at the base of the organ with the belly; therefore, the entire covering of the penis is pushed forward and elongated as the organ becomes erect or advances in length during the growth of the individual. Every experienced practitioner has observed, with both men and boys, a perfectly free glans penis, the foreskin sufficiently well back to expose the entire glans, on whom no operation had been performed.

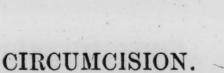
If these cases could have been observed in infancy and childhood, it would have been readily noticed that

the foreskin was more or less dilated and non-adherent, which condition allowed the glans to push its way through, or partially so, during every erection, and finally, as the individual matured, the glans became perfectly free, as much so as though an early circumcision had been performed. The fact is, the skin did not elongate as there was no resistance about the end of the organ to drag it away from the base, as in the former instance.

Experience has taught me in my own practice, that the perfectly natural condition, as expressed above, can readily be brought about in all cases by a simple method of treatment. To accomplish this, we simply dilate the little foreskin, break up the adhesions, and allow perfect freedom without the use of scalpel or removal of tissue.

It would seem to us that the lower animals grow up with a perfect physical adjustment without special interference, which cannot be said of the human being. It was undoubtedly due to the fact that children and men suffered with serious complications ages ago, which resulted in the old operation of circumcision, and has kept it a recognized practice to the present day.

We are led to believe that man, possessing a different and more complicated structure, nature intended to endow with superior intelligence that he might correct, if possible, any irregularities in the infant, and allow the organ to grow and develop in a regular and normal manner. Hence, I feel that a contracted and adherent prepuce is an irregularity and should



by all means be corrected. The method of treatment suggested may be done at any time prior to puberty, but earlier is advisable, as it may be the means of preventing serious complications in the health of the child. Within a few days after the baby is born, and while being held in the lap of the nurse, I apply a few drops of a two per cent solution of cocain, preferably with a small dropper, into the preputial opening, holding and drawing forward the little prepuce with the other hand. After a few minutes I gently insert the points of a small dressing or hemostatic forceps into the opening, being careful to draw the foreskin well forward, so as not to injure the meatus urinarius, and by gently widening the blades, succeed very readily in dilating sufficiently to push the foreskin well back beyond the corona glandis. If adhesions are present, I simply separate them with a small groove director or any suitable blunt instrument that may be found in my pocket case.

The parts should be carefully washed with warm water and soap, as smegma is always present, and then anointed with oil or vaseline, being very careful to draw the foreskin completely over again, so that no constriction of the parts can possibly occur. The nurse is instructed to push the foreskin well back each morning while bathing the baby, and after washing and anointing to bring it forward again as directed by the physician in attendance. And finally, the mother observes the same frequent care until the foreskin is perfectly free and diluted, when once a week will be often enough to repeat the process. I find it necessary where the foreskin is unusually long and narrow, to repeat the diluting with cocain and forceps after a day or two, or when any slight irritation has subsided. By this method the seeming surplus amount of preputial tissue is largely utilized in the dilating; the long, narrow condition is converted into a shorter and wider one. This done, the child's penis has been converted into the same natural free state, as formerly observed. I would further advise that boys be instructed to care for themselves as early as possible and to keep the foreskin clean with free use of cold water and soap. This being the age of progress in all the branches of medicine and hygiene leading as far as possible to prophylactic and preventive medicine, I would advise most earnestly that the family physician encourage the nurses and parents to carefully observe the rules I have suggested, and to occasionally have the children examined in order that a perfect condition may be maintained. If this is neglected the foreskin will become foul, and slight adhesions take place which may readily be broken up, but which should never exist with ordinary care.

Therefore, after observing that a considerable percentage of male individuals arrive at maturity with their organs in perfect condition without an operation, and after removing all the obtacles by the method of treatment suggested, it is perfectly clear and reasonable that the old cutting method is entirely unwarranted and obsolete.

### THE ADULT.

If the foregoing method of treatment were adopted in all cases of infants and children, operative interference would seldom be necessary. Mankind has ever been slow and unwilling to abandon the well-trodden

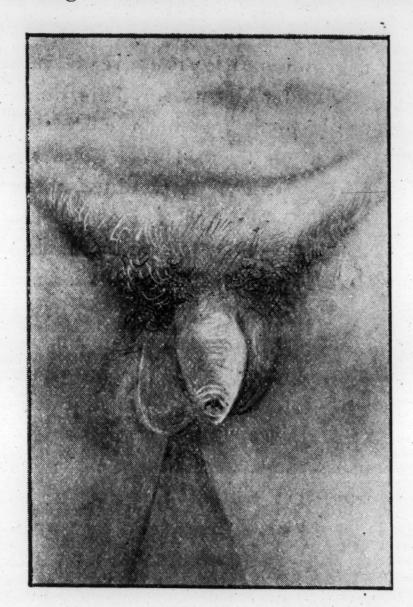


Plate 1—As patient appeared before operation.

paths and cumbersome ways of doing things; and, until we shall evolved much further in the scale of social and physical improvement, the surgeon will be called upon to correct many evils that could have been averted.

For a number of years I have been doing a simple operation, which has proved satisfactory in my practice, and has entirely substituted the old method of circumcision in adults, in all uncomplicated cases. Our patients now are unlike infants and children, having arrived at maturity in possession of the long and for ever unclean foreskin,

and we find it very necessary to adopt another method of treatment removal of tissue is now necessary as the organ is fully developed, with its superfluous prepuce existing under various conditions. The covering of the penis being in the form of a coneshaped tube, with its apex inverted forming the inner or mucous lining covering the glans, and attaching itself back of the corona, it becomes (plate 1) necessary to simply shorten the tube in order to properly uncover the glans. This is easily accomplished by making the reduction at the base instead of the apex, as under the old method. The section of skin to be removed is in the form of a triangle with each of its points rounded.

The operation may be done under local or general anesthesia, a one per

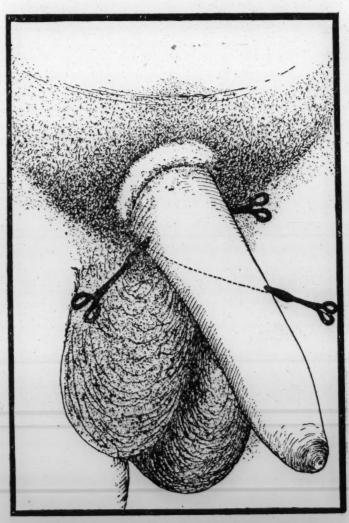


Plate 2-Showing marking forceps.

cent solution of cocain answers admirably, carefully injected in small quantities about the site of the operaoff quite short with scissors, and shave only the site of the operation as the patient is more comfortable during the reproduction of the hair. The parts

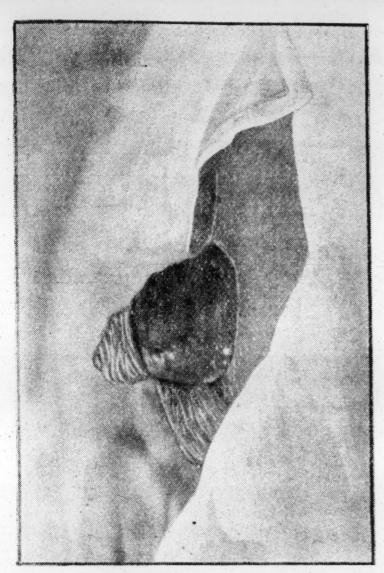


Plate 3-Denuded surface.

should be thoroughly washed with synol soap, and rendered as aseptic as possible with bichloride solution, one to two thousand. The cocain is now injected, and the patient soon ready for the operation.

The operator should carefully measure by drawing the skin back and ascertaining exactly how much shortening is necessary. If we remember that the foreskin is double we will find it will greatly aid us in estimating the exact distance. For example, if the foreskin is one inch in length from the corona glandis to the end, then we should denude two inches from the base along the dorsum to the point of

measurement, to account for the mucous membrane which is also an inch Having ascertained the in length. amount to be removed and marked the point on the dorsum and on each side at the base with small forceps (plate 2), we proceed with a small scalpel to outline the section to be removed. Beginning at the juncture of the organ with the bubes and extending around either side about two-thirds the circumference passing around the marking forceps and including them in the piece to be removed, with a neat curve we proceed in a direct line to the dorsal forceps passing around them and thence down the other side encircling



Plate 4—Showing stitches applied.

the other lateral forceps, and up to the point of beginning. The section of skin should be carefully dissected off leaving the fascia and blood-vessels undisturbed (plate 3). The parts are now approximated and the stitches put in completing the operation. I prefer medium silk sutures, of best aseptic quality, placing the first stitch in the dorsal median line, and as many in-



Plate 5-With dressing applied.

terrupted stitches as are necessary to close the sides. (Plate 4.)

Any simple aseptic dry dressing is all that is necessary, held by a suspensory bandage. I advise the suspensory bandage in preference to the perineal, as the latter frequently gives discomfort and is in the way. (Plate 5.) This operation can be made perfectly aseptic, and can be done without laying the patient up. If the foreskin should be a little tight it can be easily brought over the glans after the operation for a few hours, or until any constriction is relieved, and after a few days it will be amply dilated. In cases where the foreskin is very tight, it would be advisable to dilate gradually for a few weeks before operating, and when this cannot be done I would advise gentle and complete dilatation under anesthesia, at the time of operating.

It is very necessary to be particular about the measurements, as the tendency is to remove too little rather than too much skin. The foreskin, as previously mentioned, being double, is deceptive, and, unless great care is exercised, it will still be too long after the stitches are in. In the old method, the foreskin is drawn well down and excised, so that it falls back of the

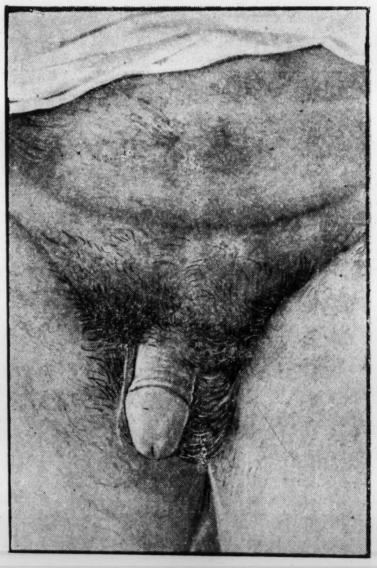


Plate 6—Ten weeks after operation.
corona glandis, and the mucous membrane is split up and rounded off to fit, without any regard to measurements.

For this operation I claim many advantages over the old, viz: The delicate grading of skin with mucous mem-

brane has not been disturbed; sensitive nerves are not severed; there is no hemorrhage except the very slight obzing from the capillaries of the severed skin; circulation has not been interrupted and edema avoided; the wound can be made aseptic and less painful; the dressings do not become soiled or wet by the urine, and may

remain until union is complete; the slight line or scar is covered by the hair, as it is reproduced; the operation is more easily done, and the wound is healed in half the time required by the old method.

—Read before San Francisco County Society of Physicians and Surgeons, Aug. 1902.

## Aspirin in the Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

BY DR. H. CYBULSKI.

Assistant Physician at Dr. Brehmer's Sanitarium, at Goebersdorf.

AN extensive literature already exists on aspirin, which was introduced several years ago. In regard to the general properties of this remedy attention must be especially directed to its insolubility in acid fluids, while in those of alkaline reaction it splits up into its components. On this account it passes practically unchanged through the stomach, and therefore is devoid of the irritating effect of salicylic acid preparations upon the gastric mucous membrane, while in the alkaline juices of the intestine it liberates salicylic acid. Furthermore, the experiments of Dreser have shown that, unlike the salicylates, aspirin exerts no injurious influence upon the heart, but on the contrary may have a tonic effect upon that organ. Both of these properties are of distinct importance in the therapeutics of phthisis, since during its continued use the stomach and heart remain unaffected.

Numerous reports, the enumeration of which would occupy too much space,

express themselves very favorably in regard to the beneficial action of aspirin in acute articular rheumatism, influenza, and endocarditis, as well as in regard to its analgesic influence. In reference to its employment in pulmonary phthisis very little has been written on this subject, and I therefore take the liberty of presenting a few observations.

As one of the indications of aspirin, I would regard the dry as well as exudative pleurisy, which not infrequently occurs during the course of tuberculosis. In numerous instances of this kind I have gained the impression that under its use the morbid process runs a shorter and milder course, especially as regards the fever, than when other pharmaceutical preparations are employed. The daily dose must be somewhat larger than customary, about 45 to 60 grains, and in order to avoid profuse sweating it is advisable to administer the drug frequently in seven grain doses.

Another indication is colds attended with fever or acute trachitis and bronchitis of streptococcic or staphylococcic origin, such as occur so commonly in the course of chronic phthisis. The diaphoretic action of aspirin, and, perhaps, also its specific influence upon the pus organisms. have a very favorable effect upon the course of the process. Here the remedy must be given in doses of 15 to 20 grains in hot tea with lemon or red wine, in the evening. In the night profuse sweating ensues, and the patient feels better during the morning. If the disease is more obstinate smaller doses must be given several times during the day, and the larger dose repeated at night.

A third indication for the employment of aspirin in phthisical cases is the febrile conditions which appear in the last stages of the disease and are accompanied with rigors. These are usually cases of mixed infection. As a medium sized dose I would advise four grains every two hours; one hour before the occurrence of the chills the dose should be increased to 7, 8 or 12 grains. In these cases the effect is excellent, and much better than that of other drugs. The temperature falls rapidly and sometimes abruptly.

The sweating produced when aspirin is given in the above manner is never excessive. The absence of any disturbances of the stomach or heart, even during its continued use, is of special importance. Hence we are warranted in saying that in aspirin we possess an excellent remedy, which, if properly employed, is almost a specific.

—Therapie der Gegenwart, September, 1902.

Blood and Urine in Syphilis.

Dr. E. Buffa, in his conclusions on the condition of the urine and blood in syphilis says, that (1) the urine of syphilities, far from being hyperacid, is, on the contrary, hypoacid, and that this hypoacidity is but little diminished by a stay in the hospital; (2) the acidity of the blood also suffers a considerable diminution; (3) the mercurial cure, acting upon the body in general, and probably the liver in particular, increases the hypoacidity of the urine, and consequently also that of the blood; (4) finally, the mercurial cure, specifically for the syphilitic manifestations, is insufficient to bring on a complete cure, and it is necessary to combine with it a treatment acting upon the nutrition in general and upon the nervous and hepatic functions in special. -Med. Rev. of Rev.

## Incision of the Ovary for the Relief of Ovarian Tension Pain.

Dr. H. Howitt (N. Y. Med. Jour., July 5, 1902), the author, has successfully relieved ovarian pain and the worrying reflex symptoms, by incising the ovary, in fourteen cases. and general disturbance, however, should be sufficiently severe to render the patient incapable of attending to her ordinary duties, of considerable duration, and not amenable to judicious medical treatment. The surgeon, also, should be able to satisfy himself that the ovaries are larger than normal and sensitive. The history must show aggravation of the pain before or during menstruation.

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# Editorial Rotes.

## A Suggestion for 1903.

This is almost the proper season for making good resolutions, and as we always try to be in fashion, and as our January number is usually delayed we will suggest one to you. At the beginning of the year, now drawing to a close, we set a high standard of excellence for this Journal and we feel that we have not failed. The twelve numbers comprising Vol. XXIII are the best we could publish. Taking the entire issue for the year, there are more original, brief, practical articles by California physicians than have ever been published in a like space of time. We are proud of our work but more pleased and proud to know that California writers have honored us with the publication of their manuscript.

It was a hard struggle to overcome the modesty and personal prejudice of some of our best men. Small differences and intagonism towards former editors had to be overcome with tact and patience, but how well we have succeeded is proven by the material which we have published, some of which has been appropriated by Eastern journals, not always with credit to us however.

And now for the New Year! cannot promise much improvement but we feel with a continuance of the

support which we have gained, that we can safely promise that the Journal will not retrograde and that it will continue to be the largest an I cheapest purely medical publication west of Chicago.

Our January issue will appear in a new dress of type and will be printed in first-class style on a cylinder press. Our increased issue and the demands of our advertisers makes this change necessary, and although it means a much greater cost of publication, yet, as we have stated many times in the past, we will adopt anything which will bring the California Medical Journal and California eclecticism to the front no matter whether it prove to our immediate personal advantage or not.

This is a labor of love as all work in the furtherance of any movement must be. We entered upon it with the handicap of dissension, jealousy, and hard times, but we had energy and faith in the ultimate prosperity of College and Journal through the renewed interest and loyalty which we hoped to inspire in the California alumni. In three years the college has been greatly changed and improved in equipment, management and faculty, and the instruction given is now more thorough and practical than at any time in its history. These changes may all be attributed to the active interest of the younger men and the infusion of new blood without the friction and unpleasantness usually attendant upon such movements should be especially gratifying to us all.

The first steps toward the creation

of a new building have been taken. Gradually the way will open. Such an enterprise requires time and careful consideration and cannot be carried to completion in a few months or a year.

We thank you for your support during the past years of adversity and we trust that you will take to yourself the credit of being a factor in the progress which has been made. Don't forget the College, the State Society and the Journal. Help each one in every way you can and you will make the word ECLECTIC synonymus, as it should be, with progress, liberality and prosperity! That is the best resolution we can suggest to you for 1903, and we hope that you will start the good work by sending us something, anything, everything for publication. If we can't use it, it won't be your fault, you will have tried, and that is all any of us can do. But DO that!

### The Materia Medica Club.

Some months ago a few energetic eclectics of Chigago formed the American Eclectic Materia Medica Club, the purpose of which is to study the American Materia Medica from the eclectic view point. An invitation was extended to all eclectics to enter into the work and the papers were sent through the mail to every eclectic who joined the club, with requests to add his own experience with the use of the drug under discussion and to send the papers on to another member. The work started very well, but of late

there has been a falling off in the number of papers. We trust this is only temporary and that every member of the club will consider it his duty to contribute something in the way of experience before sending the papers on. The manuscript is now being published in eight page installments in our journal, a year's subscription to which is included in the membership fee of \$2.00, which should be sent to the secretary, Dr. A. W. Smith, 748 S. Spaulding Ave., Chicago. This fee is just sufficient to cover the expenses of the club Do not fail to join!

We have places for two good eclectic physicians in this State. No one to buy out and nothing but ability required. Write us for particulars at once if you want to make a change.

We send out our subscription statements this month. If there is any error in yours, notify us and we will be pleased to correct it. Do not neglect this, as after a few years have elapsed we must stand by our books as being correct.

A subscription blank for renewal will be found in this book and we call particular attention to the liberal offer made delinquent subscribers.

### THROUGH THE TELEPHONE.

Mrs. Merony—"Is that you, doctor?" Doctor—"Yes; who is it?"

Mrs. Merony—"Mrs. Merony. Oh doctor, what shall I do for the baby? He has swallowed a dime."

Doctor—"Well, you surely don't want to spend \$2 to get a dime, do you?"

And the telephone ceased to work, —Newman Independent.

# Book Rotes.

ALL BOOKS reviewed in these columns may be examined by prospective purchasers, at the Jour-NAL Editorial rooms from 10 to 12 daily, within thirty days of the appearance of the review. We invite students to examine these publications. Fublishers will please notify us of the net price of all books.

Kirkes' Physiology—Revised by Drs. W. H. Rockwell, Jr., and Chas. G. Dance, A.M. Seventeenth American edition with five hundred illustrations and colored plates. Published by William Wood & Co., New York. Price \$3.00.

Kirkes' has always been considered a standard text book and has been used for so many years in our colleges that it needs no introduction to medical men. This revised edition has some improvements and the cuts are better than one has any reason to expect in a book of such moderate price. The chapter on physiological chemistry and that on the blood has been brought up to date. We can find nothing to criticise unfavorably as the work seems as perfect as is required in the field of its usefulness. The binding and typography is up to the publishers' usual standard, and the book will endure the hard usage given by students.

Transactions of National Eclectic Medical Association for the Year endiny June 19, 1902—Edited by Finley Ellingwood, Secretary, 103 State Street, Chicago.

We especially wish to compliment the Editor and Secretary upon the promptness with which this volume appeared. There is nothing especially worthy of comment in the papers but the Prize Essay on Specific Medicine, the President's Address, and that of

the Secretary which deals with the question of our survival as a "School," are all good and worthy of the earnest attention of every eclectic physician. One statement is made by the Secretary which is startling in its significance and disgusting to all loyal eclectics. He says: "Polk's Directory, depending upon the statement of each individual doctor as to what school he belongs, registers less than 4,500 physicians who are willing to be called Eclectics." In view of the fact that our school is second in numerical strength and that our colleges have graduated over 12,000 eclectic physicians the only conclusion we can reach is that the percentage of invertebrates in the United States is greater than we bad any reason to believe. The life of "a man without a country" was surely preferable to the ambiguous position of these graduates of eclectic colleges who order the "R" placed behind their names in the Medical Register. What do they gain except the contempt of the men of all schools? We should be heartily in favor of revoking the diplomas of all such.

Practical Medicine Series of Year Books—Vol. I Practical Medicine, October, 1902. Edited by Drs. Frank Billings and J. H. Salisbury. The Year Book Publishers, 40 Dearborn St., Chicago.

This is the first volume of the new series, and a book will appear each month until the full set of ten volumes is completed. These books are composed of extracts from the medical journals of the world, and the matter treats of all departments of medicine

and surgery, each book covering a distinct field.

The entire set may be subscribed to for \$7.50. The price of this single book is \$1.50.

Visiting Lists for 1903.

This is the season for the physician to balance up his last year's accounts, if he can, and start the New Year resolved to keep a more carefull record of his visits. The only way to do this is to carry a convenient record book and make the entry at the time the service is rendered.

We have been favored with three samples of visiting lists which are all good and either one of which will fill the needs of any physician.

P. Blakiston's, Son & Co., Philadelphia, price \$1.00.

William Wood & Co., New York, price \$1.00.

Medical Council, Philadelphia, \$1.00,

The Right and Wrong Use of Digitalis Based on Cardiac Pathology.

W. H. Porter recommends that digitalis be discontinued every few days to avoid sudden and fatal syncope. In both insufficiency and stenosis of the left auriculo-ventricular orifice it improves the condition temporarily; in the former instance by more quickly and effectually closing the incompetent orifice. It also intensifies the systolic contraction and more completely empties the contents of the ventricular cavity into the aorta. In a similar manner, in mitral stenosis, the prolonged diastole, with an intensified contraction of the auricle, enables the

latter to fill the ventricle more completely. Up to the point of overcoming the increased arterial tension and the removal of the venous engorgement, the physiological action of the circulation as well as the mechanical action of the heart is greatly improved. Once the normal tension has been reached and passed, the action of the digitalis is detrimental to all the physiological functions of the body, because it increases the work of the cardiac muscle, poisons the muscle fibers and progressively decreases the nutritive supply distributed to the organ. In aortic lesions, either in incompetency or stenosis, there seems to be no good reason for using digitalis at any stage. In fatty degeneration, or any enfeebled condition of the heart muscles, digitalis is contraindicated. In hypertrophy it might be useful in cutting down the nutritive supply, thus lessening the tendency further to hypertrophy, even if the hypertrophic condition could not be completely removed. It should not be given to influence the heart and circulation when the arteries are very much relaxed and the pulmonary or systemic veins overfilled with blood. It has been advised to give nitroglycerine in conjunction with digitalis so as to overcome the the damaging effect of the drug .-Phil. Med. Jour.

### Position of the Sick in Bed.

Dr. Jos. Byrne, of New York City, in *Merck's Archives* for March, 1902, calls attention to the importance of positions in bed in very weak states of

the patient. For instance, the muscular tone of a very debilitated patient may be so relaxed as to permit the tongue to fall back into the throat sufficient to impede respiration in some cases, thus leading to death, that might be obviated by laying the patient on the side with the face turned rather down toward the bed, thus permitting the tongue to rest upon the side of the mouth and fall forwards, and allowing a freer ingress of air to the lungs. In many diseases the materies morbi has spent itselt after a certain time, the patient being weakest when this is nearly ended, and ready to succumb to the respiratory difficulty mentioned at such a time, though able to pass beyond this point, and thence to ultimate recovery, if safe-guarded through the few hours or even days while the attacking force is spending itself. Dr. Byrne claims to be satisfied of having saved individuals in this way, and we do not doubt but that he is right .-Med. Council.

### Pleural Effusion of Enlarged Liver.

To distinguish between a small pleural effusion and an enlarged liver or subdiaphragmatic abscess, Henry (Boston Medical and Surgical Journal) determines by percussion the upper line of dullness on the chest wall and then has the patient breathe in deeply and hold the breath. The upper area of dullness will now be found at a lower level if the liver and not the pleura is involved.—Denver Medical Times.

## THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL JOURNAL

Edited by H. Bosworth Crocker, M. D.

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## MEDICINAL PLANTS OF AMERICA.

## Veratrum Viride,\*

BY PROF. JOHN URI LLOYD, PHAR. M., PH. D., LLD., CINCINNATI, O.

VERATRUM has long been one of the conspicuous remedies of eclectic practitioners and is commended by all their authorities. The late Professor A. Jackson Howe, M. D. was partial to it, considering veratrum viride to be one of the most valuable American remedies.

In 1897 the author contributed a paper on this drug to the Western Druggist of Chicago which brought its history and pharmacognosy to that date. Since then little has been added in these directions, the following being a complete record, including the Western Druggist study of the drug.

This is quite a common plant in many parts of the United States, particularly in the Eastern States. It grows in swampy situations, wet meadows, and along the borders of streams. It is usually well known to the people in sections where it is found who call it itch-weed, Indian poke, poke root,† or American hellebore, swamp hellebore, etc. The earliest travelers made mention of it. Josselyn¹ records that

<sup>\*</sup>The thanks of the writer are extended to Mr. C. G. Lloyd for botanical notes and to Dr. Sigmond Waldbott, librarian of the Lloyd Library, for invaluable assistance

<sup>†</sup>A name that is universally used with phytolacca decandra.

it is used as an ordeal by the American Indians, somewhat on the same order as the ordeals by the negroes of Africa at the present day. He supposed it was the same as veratrum album of Europe, and notes its abundance, stating "that you may in a small compass gather whole cart-loads of it,"

Peter Kalm<sup>2</sup> states that it is very common in marshy places, and frequently caused the death of stock which ate the young leaves in spring; also that the settlers employed a decoction of the root to poison the seed corn, to prevent the birds from eating it §; and also the root was used as an insecticide.

According to Loudon, the plant was introduced into Europe in 1742, though most authorities ascribe to Peter Collinson its introduction in 1763.<sup>4</sup> It was named and described in the first edition of Aiton's Hortus Kewensis (vol. 3, p. 422, 1789) as veratrum viride, and Aiton by most writers, is given as the author of the name. In justice, however, the credit should be given to William Solander, an English botanist and illustrous pupil of Linnæus, who (although no mention of the fact is made in the publication) furnished the descriptions and nomenclature of the new species described in Aiton's work.‡

Veratrum viride appears among the earliest swamp plants in the spring, usually associated with skunk cabbage (symplocarpus fœtidus, Nutt). At first a bunch of radical leaves appears, then it sends up a stout leafy stem four to eight feet high. The leaves below are large, six to twelve inches long, one-half as wide. They closely cover the stem with their sheathing bases and gradually become smaller toward the top of the plant, where they are finally reduced to bracts. They are broadly oval in shape, acute at the end,

<sup>§</sup>The statement being that the marauding birds were sickened and did not return.

Dictionary of National Biography. "Alton, Wm." New York, 1885 to date.

margins entire, and have prominent parallel ribs. The flowers appear in June. They are borne in a dense terminal pyramidal panicle a foot or more in length. When in bloom the plant with its large bunch of terminal yellowish-green flowers is a conspicuous object. Each flower has six segments to the perianth, six stamens opposite the segments, and a three-styled ovary which develops in fruit into a three-celled, three-lobed, dry capsule.

Veratrum viride is conceded by all modern botanists to be a distinct species; it is so close, however, to veratrum album of Europe that the explorers of America and some of the earlier botanists and travelers—Michaux (Flor. bor. am. Vol. II, p. 249) Josselyn, Kalm², David Schoepf, thought it was the same species. Certainly the rhizomes of both plants bear a close resemblance to each other, even in their microscopical aspects. 28

Skunk cabbage root has been used as an adulterant of veratrum viride, but according to Bastin it may easily be recognized microscopically by its characteristic starch grains, while the smell is an indication of its presence in the fresh condition only.<sup>27</sup>

Veratrum viride, as it occurs in commerce, consists of the rhizome with the numerous rootlets attached, and frequently is sliced. Sometimes it appears in trade coarsely ground and pressed into oance or pound packages.

The author of this study considers perfectly green veratrum root inferior to that drug when properly cured. Extended investigation of its characters have shown him that preparations of green veratrum neither possess the value of the recent nearly dried rhizome nor will they keep as well, decomposing readily. It was also stated at the meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association in Atlanta, Ga., that Norwood's veratrum is made from the dried, or nearly dried drug which the writer's experience leads him to accept

as rational. The drug obtained from New York State is preferred by the author of this paper.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES AND CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS,

The medicinal virtues of the drug seem to reside in the rhizome alone; at least Maisch11 has found that the dried leaf-stalks, which sometimes occur attached to the rhizome, are inert, though containing a saponaceous principle. The American Indians have long known the plant to be an emetic, and Rafinesque' reports that this emetic property is so strong in the drug that cases are on record where external application to the legs (in cutaneous diseases) has caused emesis The acrid properties of the root are well known; when masticated it burns the mouth and fauces. and when snuffed up the nostrils in the form of powder, it causes violent sneezing and a copious discharge of mucus. Another conspicuous property of the drug is its sedative action on the circulation of the blood, it having the power to reduce the pulse from 75 or 80 to 35 or 40 beats in a minute,

Osgood observed the stability of veratrum preparations as early as 1835; an aqueous extract inspissated in the sun retained its activity for more than three years. This statement is well supplemented by some recent investigations of Pellacani regarding the power of resistance of various alkaloids in putrefying media; it was observed by him that veratrine (which is at least closely related to the active principles of our plant) held out longest of all alkaloids examined, i. e., for 39 months.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Osgood, 1835, probably was the first in this country to institute experiments, though unsuccessfully, with a view of isolating from veratrum viride its active principle<sup>8</sup>. Mitchell, in 1837, found in the rhizome gum, resin, starch, red coloring matter, wax, sugar, a bitter principle probably analogous to veratrine, and gallic acid<sup>9</sup>. Richardson, 1857,

obtained an alkaloid, which from parallel tests he judged to be veratrine, the alkaloid that previously had been obtained from veratrum sabadilla.10 In 1865 Bullock12 isolated a resin and two alkaloids, neither, however, responding to the tests for veratrine. One of these alkaloids was soluble in ether, and later was named by Dr. Geo. B. Wood, veratroidia; the other insoluble in ether, and was called viridia by the same authority. The latter alkaloid (viridia) was established by Mitchell<sup>14</sup> in 1874 to be identical with jervine, an alkaloid discovered by E. Simon in 1837 in the root of veratrum album, and at first named by him barytine. Bullock15 observed with jervine a perceptible sedative effect; more recently24 it has been shown to be faintly toxic. Mitchell observed the insolubility of jervine sulphate, a property clearly recognized by the discoverer of jervine (Simon), who for that reason had first assigned to it the name barytine. The nitrate of jervine was also found by Bullock to be soluble with difficulty in water or solution of potassium nitrate, a property which permits its separation from other alkaloids.15

In 1876 Bullock withdrew veratroidia<sup>16</sup>, stating that jervine is the only alkaloid in the root of veratrum viride, veratroidia being a mixture of jervia with a light-colored resin, the presence of which increases the solubility of jervine in ether

Th. Wormley, in 1876, made the statement<sup>17</sup> that in both V. album and V. viride an alkaloid exists which unmistakably responds to all the tests for veratrine. Again, Robbins, in 1877, declared the non-existence of veratrine and the existence of jervine in veratrum viride, to which he adds a new alkaloid, which he calls veratridine.<sup>20</sup>

In 1878 Tobin established new formulæ for jervine and veratroidine, while E. Schmidt assigned to veratrine the formula C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>50</sub>NO<sub>9</sub> as the result of nine analyses. In the same year, C. R. Alder Wright and A. P. Luff undertook an exhaustive study of the alkaloids of both veratrum album and

viride.<sup>21</sup> They obtained per kilogram of drug the following alkaloids in gram weights.

	Veratrum Album.	Veratrum Viride.
Jervine	1.3	0.20
Pseudojervine	0.4	0.15
Rubijervine	0.25	0.02
Veratralbine	2.20	trace
Veratrine	0.05 (le	ess than) 0.004
CevadineApparently absent		0.43
	$\overline{4.20}$	0.80

Hence, half the proportion of the total alkaloids of veratrum viride would consist of cevadine ( $C_{32}H_{49}NO_9$ ) Wright and Luff's sternutatory alkaloid from sabadilla seed, the remainder being about an even mixture of jervine ( $C_{26}H_{37}NO_3$ ) and pseudojervine ( $C_{29}H_{43}NO_7$ ).

However, other and later investigators have not acquiesced in these conclusions. In 1890 G. Salzberger<sup>24</sup> published the results of a prolonged investigation of veratrum album, discovering in this plant the exceedingly poisonous, sternutatory and unstable alkaloid protoveratrine, and the non-poisonous bitter alkaloid protoveratridine. Besides, he confirmed Wright and Luff's formulæ for the crystallizable alkaloids, jervine, pseudojervine and rubijervine. In the same year Pehkschen<sup>25</sup> also contributed a paper and included veratrum viride in his researches. From the latter drug he obtained 0.08 per cent of total crude alkaloids, which he found to consist principally of jervine, C14H22NO2, and a small amount of veratroidine C22H53NO9. The latter alkaloid and some rhombic crystals that he obtained from veratrum album, possessed marked sternutatory properties, while jervine did not exhibit this property. Reviewing these results, it seems evident that the existence of jervine in veratrum viride is well established. However, in consequence of the otherwise somewhat discordant reports, another critical study of ver-

atrum viride is desirable in order to establish its exact qualitative and quantitative composition beyond a doubt. An exceedingly painstaking compilation and classification of the results hitherto arrived at in the chemistry of veratrum is contained in Charles Sohn, "A Directory of Active Principles of Plants," London, 1894.

### PHARMACOPEIAL RECORD.

While veratrine, a mixture of alkaloids obtained from the seeds of cevadilla (asagraea officinalis, Linn.) has found a place practically in all pharmacopeias, veratrum viride and some preparations of this drug occur only in the British and the United States pharmacopeias. The latter has carried this drug since the 1820 edition.

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## Veratrum Viride,

BY RALPH M. MORRILL, M. D.,

Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in Lincoln Medical College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

THE therapy of veratrum viride is to a large extent dependent upon its physiological action. I do not mean to say that its toxic effect is its therapeutic effect, but the toxic effect, in a great many of its phases, is an exaggeration of the therapeutic action. It is classed as a vaso-motor depressant, i.e., it has a special action on that portion of the floor of fourth ventricle, in which the vaso-motor centre lies. It being a depressant, it must stimulate the vaso-dilator nerves, and the result of that stimulation is profoundly manifested when the full bounding pulse is present that indicates the use of the drug, relieving that high artificial tension that conveys the idea of increased force. It also inhibits the heart's action by stimulating the inhibitory set which passes through the spinal accessory and vagus; and, if given in large enough doses, it will produce vomiting, retching, hypercatharsis, dizziness, blindness, and at last unconsciousness, showing it to be a profound cerebro-spinal depressant. With this knowledge of it, as to how it acts, and what it acts upon, a therapy for it is easy to recognize, and accurate in its results.

### SPECIFIC SYMPTOMOLOGY.

Sthenic fevers will be the key-note to the indications for veratrum; the pulse is full and bounding, the tissues are engorged, the capillary circulation is congested, showing that the blood cannot get through readily owing to some obstruction. This condition is directly opposite to that in which belladonna will act well; belladonna and veratrum being

therapeutic incompatibles; the pulse will be corded and wiry, and when it passes under the finger it will convey the idea of increased action and force of the heart, which is due to the obstructed peripheral circulation. It might be compared to a stream of water from a garden hose when the nozzle is attached; there is force to the stream, the hose is hard, and the stroke of the pump is readily felt; but take off the nozzle, or the constricted end, and the result is more water, less force and less distention. Veratrum takes the nozzle off the capillary circulation, and the result is a free circulation, soft open pulse, better aeration of the blood, and an amelioration of all the unpleasant symptoms. Marked arterial throbbing, no matter what the cause, will indicate the use of this drug. This fact is exemplified in aortic regurgitation, where there is the throbbing carotid, and the tumultuous heart action, and here it will slow the heart and stop the arterial throbbing. In blood dyscrasia and zymotic conditions with a red stripe down the tongue, it will exert a marked alterative influence, this property probably being due to its power to relieve the obstruction to elimination, rather than to increasing retrograde metamorphosis. In convulsions, and all irritations of the nerve centres, when due to active cerebral hyperemia, it will occupy a prominent place.

### THERAPY.

In the outset of pneumonia, especially in the vigorous, not in all cases, however, but in those where the circulation is full and bounding, with the characteristic dusky redness of the face and body due to the obstructed capillary circulation, resulting in the engorged lung tissue, veratrum is indicated in small and frequently repeated doses.

In gout and rheumatism veratrum will frequently be indicated. In all serous inflammations—acute inflammation

of joints, pleuritis, peritonitis, meningitis and phrenitis the use of veratrum will be attended by good results when the proper indication is present. In endocardial involvement care should be taken in the use of veratrum.

In erysipelas, streptococchnia and all infections, with obstruction to the lymphatic circulation, in conjunction with such remedies as rhus tox. and echinacea, veratrum will hasten elimination and allay inflammation.

In tonsillitis, and accute inflammatory diseases of the throat, veratrum will frequently be of value both locally and internally, though aconite and belladonna are more often indicated in these cases.

In puerperal convulsions the indications for veratrum will be very much in evidence, and its prompt use will frequently be attended by good results. It should be given hypodermatically either alone or combined with gelseminum. I have used the two together in fifteen minim doses of each with nothing but good results. It will mitigate the seizures, or stop them entirely until proper eliminative treatment can be instituted.

In organic diseases of the heart with the throbbing carotids, and increased heart action; at the stage of hypertrophy, and more especially in diseases of the aortic valves veratrum will be found to be a remedy of signal value, quieting the palpitation, and the increased heart action; slowing and decreasing the high tension. Functional derangements of the heart are also benefitted by its use.

As an alterative veratrum will be found to be of some value in syphilitic infections, and other blood dyscrasias, working in harmony with other vegetable alteratives, it having a special action on lymphatic obstruction.

Locally, veratrum is analgesic and antiphlogistic, and applied to local inflammations such as boils, felons, and carbuncles, before suppuration has taken place, will frequently

result in a cure; odontalgia from caries may be relieved by its application on a pledget of cotton, the cavity first being cleansed; applied to "cold-sores" it is nearly a specific.

The dose of the tincture is from one to ten drops; of the extract, one-fourth grain, gradually increased until the desired effect is produced; of the powdered root, from four to ten grains; of the fluid extract, from a fraction of a minim to five minims, and of the specific medicine the same as the fluid extract.

To recapitulate—veratrum is the remedy in sthenic fevers with exaggerated force of the pulse, the capillaries being engorged, not from lack of force, but from a narrowing of the lumen of the vessels; the result of this obstruction being manifested in all conditions characterized by active hyperæmia with symptoms as a result, ranging from convulsions and unconsciousness to local inflammations.

### Veratrum Viride,

BY WM. COLLINS HATCH, M. D., NEW SHARON, ME.

WE have been deeply interested in the organization of The American Eclectic Materia Medica Club, and the commendable object for which it was established. Not wishing to be counted as derelict in so excellent a cause, we beg leave to herewith present some of our own observations and experiences in the use of veratrum viride.

Among the country-folk, in our boyhood days, this plant was invariably known as "Indian Poke." It grew in great profusion along the margin of a small brook in the neighborhood where we were born, and its identification was one of our earliest lessons in practical botany. Our first knowledge that Indian Poke was anything more than a useless weed, we well remember, was acquired in seeing stockmen use a strong decoction of the leaves to rid their young lambs of ticks (Melopha gus ovinus).

We were early taught that the plant was poisonous and something to be avoided. The early appearance of the green leaves of veratrum in spring would sometimes prove too tempting to young stock after a long confinement to dried grass; when thus eaten the leaves of this plant would cause persistent vomiting of the animal with great muscular weakness. But so far as our knowledge extends, all recovered after a time. Passing over these events of our boyhood days which may prove of no special interest or practical value we will enter upon the consideration of those of a more practical character.

We well remember our first work toward a systematic study of this plant, how, with basket and mattock, we went

to a meadow where it grew in abundance, and guided by the dead and decaying seed stalks we dug a quantity of the rhizomes and rootlets. These we carefully washed, garbled, and, after cutting the rhizomes in thin slices, thoroughly dried them on a rack suspended over the kitchen stove. In slicing the rhizomes the acrid fumes caused sneezing, smarting of the eyes, as well as slight anesthesia of the hands. Carefully conducted experiments show that the rootlets contain 79 per cent of water, while the rhizomes contain only 72 per cent. When sufficiently dried the root was reduced to a fine powder in a common mortar. This was a laborious task, and the dust arising from the operation proved extremely irritating to the nasal mucous membranes. One fact learned in this connection was that the rootlets could be more easily reduced to powder with light quick blows than by heavier ones. After passing the powder through a No. 40 sieve it was macerated for fourteen days in 83.5 per cent alcohol, the proportion being such that the expressed fluid represented, very nearly, a saturated tincture. Never in our professional life have we seen a more thoroughly reliable preparation of veratrum viride than this tincture of our own make.

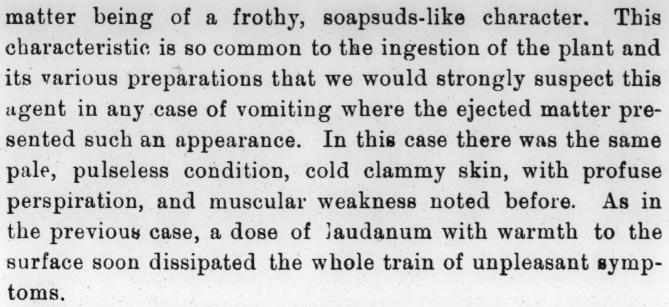
This tincture was employed in remittent and typhoid fevers, and to bring down the temperature in many of the exanthemata diphtheria and pneumonia. Following closely the dictum of our text-books, we usually administered eight drops of this tincture to a robust male patient, repeating the dose every three hours until the fever was reduced and thereafter continuing the remedy in reduced doses. We did not then, nor do we now, consider pressing the agent to nausea and vomiting as essential to its most pleasing therapeutic results. In a few instances, even with the most watchful care, nausea and retching followed the exhibition of this remedy much to the annoyance of the patient and

his friends. One patient we well remember could not tolereven drop doses of tincture of veratrum.

Never in but two instances, however, did we see its toxic properties manifested in a very marked degree. But in neither of these was the fault our own. The first of these occurred in the winter of 1877-8, when about four o'clock one cold morning, we received a hasty summons to go about five miles into the country to one of our patients, suffering from a sharp attack of tonsilitis: On our arrival found the patient sitting bolstered up in bed, pale as death, skin cold and clammy, and bathed in profuse perspiration. Pulse imperceptible at the wrist, and the pulsation of the carotids slow and labored. Though the patient complained of nausea there was no vomiting after our arrival. We immediately administered a dose of laudanum, applied heat to the extremities and soon had the patient comfortable. The tonsilitis, which in previous attacks had shown a tendency to pass into the suppurative form was cut short by this accident.

When the patient had been made comfortable, we made careful inquiry to ascertain if possible the cause of this mishap. We learned that the patient's husband had been caring for her through the night, and shortly after midnight had fallen asleep. Awaking at two o'clock A. M. the husband immediately gave 'the patient a dose of "the drops." On further questioning he admitted that not being fully awake when he dropped out the medicine he could not see very well and thought that he might have given more than the prescribed number of drops, which was evidently the case.

The following May we had our second and last experience with the toxic effect of veratrum. Here the fault was the patient's own in allowing her little daughter "to drop the medicine." In this instance the agent produced the most distressing nausea and persistent vomiting, the ejected



Though veratrum, in overdoses, is capable of producing alarming symptoms, as the foregoing abundantly proves, we fully concur with Prof. H. C. Wood, in the opinion that a fatal result will not occur from a single dose of any of the officinal preparations, however large, in a robust adult. Recoveries are reported from teaspoonful doses of the fluid extract, also where a tumblerful of the tincture had been ingested.

After the unpleasant experiences just related, we set about devising some means to avoid such accidents as well as to obviate the development of unpleasant physiological effects. This we accomplished by dispensing the agent in water, flavored with checkerberry, in such proportions that a teaspoonful of the dilution represented on drop of the tincture. This we directed to be given a teaspoonful every twenty thirty or sixty minutes, as the case might require, watching the patient carefully and suspending the remedy or diminishing the dose on the first manifestation of that condition.

Since adopting this plan, the use of veratrum has been without any untoward effect, and far more pleasing in results. From the very first it has been forcibly impressed on my mind that this agent is of the greatest value, therapeutically, in sthenic rather than asthenic conditions. This

impression has grown with our growth until now we never prescribe it in the last named diathesis.

Veratrum has proved an excellent remedy, both locally and internally, in that sthenic form of erysipelas characterized by great swelling, and induration, the inflamed surface presenting a dark livid hue, with little tendency to either vesication or suppuration. For external use we employ a solution containing two to four drams of the saturated tincture, or an equal quantity of specific veratrum, in four ounces of water. The inflamed surface is kept covered with small pieces of cloth wet in the solution and changed as often as they become dry. Only one thickness of cloth should be used. For the internal use of the agent in this disease no cut and dried rule can be formulated, as much will depend on the skill and judgment of the physician in adapting the medicament to the case in hand. Our usual prescription is thirty to forty drops of the saturated tincture or specific medicine, to four ounces of water administered at frequent intervals if there be much febrile disturbance of the circulatory system, and promptly diminishing the dose, or preferably lengthening the interval between the doses at the proper juncture.

We have treated pneumonias, sometimes with this agent alone, and at others in combination with such other agents as seemed indicated. Here small doses, twenty drops to four ounces of water, dose a teaspoonful, have given us the most satisfactory results. In this, as in other diseases, study to so graduate the frequency of your doses as to avoid unpleasant nausea. The pneumonia of old age is almost invariably that of asthenia, hence there are better agents for that condition than veratrum, according to our experience.

In rheumatic fever, measles, and scarlet fever we have frequently prescribed this agent to reduce the fever and bring down the pulse, providing always that the morbid condition is sthenic. As an expectorant veratrum has been of much utility and can be conveniently prescribed in combination with syrup of tolu. We are convinced that it possesses alterative properties, and, in small doses, is capable of improving the appetite. No one more keenly appreciates the fact than we that our present knowledge of the therapeutics of veratrum is as yet incomplete and that future investigators will discover new and important uses for this potent agent.

[This is the last literary work accomplished by Dr. Hatch, who died June 17, 1902, at an advanced age. Dr. Hatch was a leading eclectic in Maine, and was Secretary of the New England Eclectic Medical Association at the time of his death.—Crocker.]

### Veratrum Viride,

PROF. WILLIAM N. MUNDY, M. D., FOREST, OHIO.

VERATRUM VIRIDE, or American Hellebore consists of the rhizome and roots of veratrum viride, Nat. Ord. Liliaccæ. The plant is indigenous to the United States and Canada. The chief principles are jervine and veratroidine, which are so closely associated with the resin as to be separated with great difficulty. Writers are agreed that the medicinal action of the remedy is only obtained when these principles are combined as in the natural state, the full physiological action of the plant not being obtained by the administration of the principles separately. Poisoning or rather fatal poisoning by the administration of the drug is rare by reason of the nausea and vomiting it causes.

We use in our practice the Sp. Veratrum exclusively.

It is a cardiac and circulatory sedative of great power. It slows the pulse not only in rate but force as well. When a toxic dose is taken, the action of the heart becomes weak and the pulse so weak as to be a running pulse. The temperature is reduced and the body covered with a cold, clammy sweat. There is incessant vomiting and retching, dizziness, faintness, failure of sight, dilatation of the pupils, giddiness, muscular weakness, slow and shallow respiration, coma, insensibility and stertorous breathing. Death is due to asphyxia and paralysis of the respiratory muscles.

The slowing of the pulse is claimed to be due to its depressant action upon the heart muscle and to its stimulation of the pneumogastric nerve. The blood pressure is lowered by its direct action upon the heart muscle and by a depression of the vaso-motor center. The chief use of veratrum is a sedative to the heart and the circulation. It is especially useful in acute, sthenic or dynamic inflammations. Hare

says that by reason of its physiological action, it bleeds a man into his own blood-vessels and the indications for its use are the same in inflammations, as they would be for bleeding. The indications which we follow in its administration are: "The frequent, full and bounding pulse; engorged tissues, surface flushed, fullness of the capillary circulation." Veratrum has long enjoyed a reputation as a sedative in inflammation of the serous surfaces, hence it is of value in pneumonia, pleurisy and peritonitis.

In pneumonia we believe it to be the best remedy we possess. We do not employ it in the single large dose recommended by some; but use the smaller dose, twenty or thirty drops of the specific veratrum in a half glass of water, giving a teaspoonful of the mixture every hour. Employed thus, we secure its remedial effects, without any of its poisonous or unpleasant effects, such as nausea and vemiting. The best effects of a remedy are not secured by giving it in such large doses, that we at once secure its full physiological action. Often times a smaller dose given at closer intervals secures the same results and maintains it better, and the remedy can be administered much longer. This not only holds true of veratrum, but of aconite and other remedies as well.

In pleuritis, acute hepatitis, peritonitis or meningitis it is equally as efficient. The indications for its use are always the same; "The full, bounding pulse, or the sthenic case of inflammation.

In puerperal fever and eclampsia it has long enjoyed quite a reputation. It would not be used for the pale, anæmic woman; but rather in the robust, full-blooded woman, when the face is turgid and full; the arteries full and bounding, the carotids throbbing and the temperature high. It is the case where in former years, bleeding would have been resorted to. We would not use it as commonly advised in the text-books; but would rather give it in half-drop doses frequently repeated and watch its effects so that nausea and vomiting would be avoided.

A brother practitioner has frequently recommended it to me in mucous croup. He gives it in the small, frequently repeated dose, and pushes it to nausea. Personally we have had no experience with the drug in this disease.

It is of value in cardiac hypertrophy without valvular lesions; also in the irritable heart of otherwise healthy men. and in the irritable heart resulting from the use of tobacco.

Prof. Howe thought it to be one of our best of the socalled alteratives, and advocated its use it phthisis, claiming it to be one of the best of remedies in this affection. We have frequently used it, as we thought with good results, in those cases where we have frequent attacks of pleurisy or pneumonia.

The dose of specific veratrum is drops X to XXX in half glass of water, a teaspoonful of the mixture every hour or two, according to the necessities of the case. Given in this manner much better and lasting effects will be secured than when given in from one to five minim doses and no poisonous action will result.

### Veratrum Viride.

PROF. A. F. STEPHENS, M. D., ST. LOUIS, MO.

VERATRUM VIRIDE—Green Hellebore, American Hellebore, Indian Poke Root.

The Preparation used is Specific Medicine made from the recently dried root.

The action of this remedy is made manifest by its influence upon the heart and circulation by lessening the number of pulsations; modifying the volume; relieving arterial tension by removing nervous irritation. It favors the perspiratory function and increases the urinary excretion; all of which goes to show its beneficial effects in all active inflammations and congestions.

If the remedy is taken in sufficiently large doses, it causes dryness and an acrid burning sensation of the mucous membrane of the mouth and throat, which gradually extends to the stomach. This is followed by nausea, retching and vomiting which is violent, paroxysmal and lasting. While the effects of the poisonous dose lasts, there is muscular tremor and dizziness. The secretory and excretory organs are excited to increased action; the function of the salivary and mucous glands being greatly increased, give rise to copious salivary secretion and abundant discharge of mucus from the entire mucous surface. Accompanying these are weakened pulse-scarcely perceptible-extreme prostration; profuse perspiration, etc., but seldom or never death because of the fact that it causes vomiting and is thereby thrown off before a fatal amount can be taken into the system through the absorbents. In case a poisonous dose is swallowed, the patient must be kept in the recumbent position and stimulants, such as alcohol, etc., with morphine or laudanum in full doses should be given.

But we are interested most in the therapeutic uses of the drug and unless we become too reckless, we will escape the poisonous effects of it. First let me state that a therapeutic dose of any remedy depends upon several things. 1st. The patient to whom we wish to administer the remedy; (a) age and temperment; (b) idiosyncrasies. 2nd. The stage of the disease in which we find the patient and the effect we desire to bring about by means of our treatment; and 3d. The result will depend to a certain extent upon the personal equation of the one who administers the medicine.

Going back, then, to No. 1 of this proposition, let us consider it. If the patient be a child we would naturally give the medicine in smaller doses than if in the adult. If the child, or for that matter the adult, is robust but phlegmatic in temperament we will have to use the remedy in larger doses than if the patient were of a more delicate nature and of a nervous temperament. The last named respond much more readily to medicines than the former. What will prove only medicinal in the one, may often be poisonous to the other.

Taking now the stage of the disease. If in the early stage and we desire to abort or cut short the difficulty, we will use the largest dose permissible in order to get the effect we want. Afterward, or in the later stage when congestion has passed into inflammation, the small dose will suit our purpose best. In fact, it is to the patient's welfare that we do so use it. To illustrate, in the early stage of a pneumonia, before hepatization has begun, I believe that full doses of veratrum will often abort the difficulty; when, after hepatization, the small dose only is permissible; the one that will sustain the heart while regulating its action and modifying the arterial volume. Then again we will meet with persons who do not respond readily to treatment and giving this class the small dose is like pouring water on a duck's back.

Their idiosyncrasies cause an irresponsiveness to treatment and in many of these cases we do not get the results from the large dose that we anticipate. Opposite these we place that other class composed of the ones who will tell you if you put a drop of aconite in a half a glass of water, by the constriction it produces of the mucous membranes of the throat. These are facts that must not be overlooked in the administration of remedies, and of this one under consideration. The reasons for the foregoing facts need not be discussed here.

Specific Indications.—When and why do we use veratrum viride instead of other arterial sedatives? We use veratrum when the pulse is frequent. Not only frequent, but full and bounding. In other words, the pulse is galloping. The surface of the body is flushed and the temperature is above the normal. If we think as we work, we are apt to ask ourselves "what condition underlies these specific indications or symptoms? We do not care anything about symptoms, except insofar as they speak to us, or spell out the condition for which they stand as the expression. Looking then below the symptoms, we find that these are present whenever there is an extensive area of congestion or its subsequent, inflammation. The pulse is full because of the obstruction to the free passage of blood through the blood channels. It is bounding because of the same obstruction and the surface becomes flushed because more blood is sent into surface channels and remains there because of the same condition. Hence we can readily see that some obstruction more or less extensive, influences the circulating fluid in the manner noticed-rapid, full and bounding palse, with flushing of the surface. These symptoms persist, until the condition is changed to the normal physiological one. If now by any means we are able to cause a dislodgement of obstructing corpuscles and a reorganization of the powers of contraction in the channel walls, the difficulty is thereby overcome. If the "jam," so to speak, can at once be broken up, and the mass of accumulated debris floated off, the stream remains free and the disease is ended for the time being. Sometimes river-men use dynamite as a remedy to dislodge a gorge. At other times the accumulated mass must be removed piecemeal.

In an early stage of inflammatory action, before there has been disorganization of structure, and only a perverted function is to be corrected, the full dose of veratrum repeated as necessary, will do what the discharge of dynamite does to the gorge, dislodge it. Here, then, I would advise the maximum dose.

Taking the specific indications for our guide, we find the remedy a splendid one in the treatment of pneumonia. In fact, I have used the remedy for nearly twenty years and never has it disappointed me in its action if the condition was present to give rise to the specific indications. In this disease we have an ideal case for our remedy.—Obstruction to the circulation in the lung. As a consequence, a full bounding pulse and flushed surface. There you are as plain as the nose on your face. Who could make a mistake? I have given full doses in many of these cases that had every characteristic of a beginning pneumonia, with the result that in forty eight hours no evidence remained of threatening difficulty, except a slightly roughened respiratory sound I have been certain that I aborted many cases of pneumonia difficulty by the prompt administration of veratrum, although there is no way that it can be proven; for it is the easiest thing in the world to say that it would not have terminated in pneumonia. After deposit has taken place the remedy should be used in small doses until recovery results. The small dose is from ten to twenty drops of the specific medicine to four ounces of water and a teaspoonful given the patient every one to two hours.

Veratrum is one of our best remedies for rheumatism. Its use in this disease is restricted to that variety known as inflammatory, for reasons that are obvious when we think of the indications for the remedy.

In the early stages of puerperal peritonitis, the extensive structures involved give rise to the specific indications and this remedy given to toleration will do much towards cutting short the disease and saving the patient's life.

In scarlet fever we find the typical, full bounding pulse, with high temperature. The entire integument, as well as mucous membrane is involved. In this disease veratrum is positive in its action and curative in results. In fact with veratrum and plenty of water internally and warm baths for the skin the outcome of a case of scarlet fever is almost assured and alarm need not be felt. Analogous cases are found in measles, chicken-pox, small-pox, etc., all of which will undoubtedly show indications for veratrum and the remedy will modify favorably all of them.

One of the diseases that was, and is yet considered very dangerous to life, is erysipelas, especially when it attacks the face and head, and as a rule the head is the most favored portion of the body for its attack. If the indications are present as given above, I place my confidence in the treatment of this disease in veratrum, and look upon it as being the cardinal remedy.

Veratrum will be found one of the best remedies for controlling the ravages of tuberculosis, by its effect upon the circulation and temperature thus holding in check the destroying force that is at work in the organism. The best results are to be obtained in the early stage before extensive tuberculization has taken place. It not only lessens the pulse-beat and the temperature, but aids in clearing away

the obstructing element in the tissues. The small dose often repeated is desirable here, as it is not a profound effect that is desired.

In all cerebral diseases, especially of an actve or inflammatory variety, veratrum (often combined with gelsemium) offers the best that can be had in the way of treatment.

In all inflammations of mucous membranes, veratrum will be selected if the difficulty be of sufficient extent to cause the specific symptoms.

In puerpural convulsions veratrum is used to splendid advantage hypodermically in doses of twenty to sixty drops and repeated if necessary to control the trouble, although I believe that gelsemium offers the better treatment in these latter cases.

Topically, I have used veratrum in orchitis, mastitis, cellulitis and glandular inflammations. If the surface is not too extensive over which I wish to use the remedy, I apply the Specific Medicine in full strength.

To sum up, I am convinced, that veratrum is also antiseptic, and acting as such, it fills that office in the so-called zymotic diseases. How, or by what method, it does this, I am not prepared to offer an explanation at this time.

Veratrum is one of the many remedies mentioned in our materia medica that I use constantly. In fact it stands in a class that is not crowded.

The man who has not learned to use veratrum when the indications are present has missed one of the most important remedies in the materia medica and deprives himself of a splendid means of relieving disease and suffering, and shall I say, of saving life!

Ordinarily the dose will be from one to three minims; or better, add from twenty to sixty drops to four ounces of water and give a teaspoonful of the mixture every one to three hours as the case may require. In case you desire to administer the largest amount possible without causing nausea or producing a poisonous effect, I advise to begin with drop doses, and gradually increase until you obtain the effect you desire, making the time between doses thirty minutes.

### Veratrum Viride,

BY J. L. WRIGHT, M. D., DURHAM, MAINE.

AS this plant has been already described I will proceed at once to a consideration of its therapeutic properties.

According to my observation it is emetic, cathartic, diaphoretic, expectorant, nervine, arterial sedative, anodyne, soporific, febrifuge, resolvent, alterative and antispasmodic.

I have successfully employed it in typhoid, intermittent, remittent, and all inflammatory fevers, such as pneumonia, rheumatism, pleuritis, in delirium tremens, mania, organic and functional heart affections, congestion of the portal circulation, whooping cough, asthma, cramps, convulsions, hysteria, epilepsy, scrofula, dropsy and amenorrhœa.

Veratrum viride has been to me, and my father before me for many years, a favorite remedy; and I have learned to place great reliance upon its efficacy where indicated. It may seem to many that I have attributed to this drug too many therapeutic properties, yet had I the time I should endeavor to substantiate the claim as being in accordance with my experience in its employment.

From observation I assume that this article may reach those who are not familiar with its properties or employment; and that they may have a better undertanding of its range of application and utility I will for a few moments try to describe its action on the organism.

I will say here, that as a necessary condition to its success-

ful employment you must make a correct diagnosis else you will fail, and nothing but disappointment will reward you. It must be rightly timed and proportioned; and, with these essentials rightly carried out, success is yours. I do not regard it as a specific in any disease, yet it does have positive and specific properties. Its influences are diverse and variously manifested upon the several divisions of the animal economy.

We call it an arterial sedative as it reduces the force and frequency of the pulse. I cannot say whether this is due to a property causing a depression direct of the vital activity, or whether it is due to the correction of conditions which were the cause of the excited circulation. We know it to be a certain resolvent and deobstruent, changing the plasticity of the blood, and secretions, and promoting the activity of the absorbents, the venous system and the lymphatic glands. It controls the capillary circulation, and hence I find it of grand service in congestion of the tissues.

In small doses it stimulates the functions of the stomach, liver, pancreas, and mesentery; gives activity to the portal circulation, promotes the sanguineous excretions, as the catamenia, and controls the hemorrhage of dysentery.

In larger doses it causes vomiting and great depression, the pulse becoming small and infrequent. In still larger doses you will get painful vomiting, hemorrhage from the bowels, metorrhagia, tenesmus and death.

Extremes in medicine are always to be avoided, so in the use of veratrum. In febrile conditions we first notice, after giving the drug, a softening of the pulse, then comes elevation of the temperature of the skin, then perspiration ensues and the skin becomes soft and flexible, while the temperature of the body falls, the pulse becomes less rapid and also full and regular. Should the medicine be continued the pulse may sink to 60, 50, or even 40 beats per minute, with,

probably, vomiting, in which case the medicine must be discontinued till nausea subsides.

I never like to give it when there is undue acidity of the stomach, as when this condition exists it does not act favorably but tends to cause distortion of the muscles of the face, fingers and toes; there is, however, no disorder of the intellect, and the untoward effect soon pass off. I have seen all the bad symptoms alluded to, and have as yet never seen fatal consequences; although, I have no doubt, in too large and continuous doses it might prove fatal.

With me it has proven an alterative and depurator of great value, producing no cerebral disturbance, and never showing any narcotic influence whatever. I find it of use in acute febrile diseases where there is plasticity of the blood, and a quick, wiry pulse, as will be met with in intermittent and remittent fevers. In such cases the remedy should be given in small doses combined with fluid extract of podophyllum, alternating with tonics

In all forms of febrile exanthemata, especially scarlatina, it is my sheet-anchor, as in these diseases we find great arterial excitement, and plasticity of the blood. In these cases I combine it with asclepias. Where we find a tendency to effusion and exudation, veratrum viride will be found to do good service as a preventive. I believe others will find it of utility in these conditions. In my cases of scarlatina it has effected cures with no bad sequelæ.

I will not offer any suggestions as to dosage. Each one must learn this for himself, as dosage and the form in which the medicine is used must be regulated according to the case in hand, some patients being more susceptible to its influence than others.

### Some Experience with Veratrum Viride,

BY P. F. BULLINGTON, M. D., M. C., OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA.

In 1893 I was called to treat Joe P., aged 59 years, by occupation underground miner. I arrived about one p. m. and found the patient suffering from phlegmonous erysipelas, covering the face and extending well up into the hair; eyes inflamed and almost swelled shut. Temperature 103, patient semi-delirious, but rational when aroused. The patient said it required twice the amount of any kind of medicine to affect him that it did for the ordinary man, and cited his experience with other doctors, which was confirmed by Mrs. P.

Acting on the patient's statements regarding the amount of drugs necessary to produce an effect, I prescribed the following indicated remedies:

R	Sp. M. veratrum vir
	Sp M. rhus toxg. xxii.
	Water

M Sig. Teaspoonful every hour till fever went down, or until patient felt weak or faint—then every two hours.

About ten or eleven p. m. I was called in haste to see the patient, whom the messenger said was very sick, and he feared was dying.

As I had only about four blocks to go, I was soon on the scene, and found the patient in a state of collapse, perspiring freely, and the erysipelas in a state of inocuous desuetude. The prescription was reduced to half the former strength, time between doses lengthened, and I saw no more on that occasion, as he was soon able to resume work.

Since that time the above prescription has been my treatment for phlegmonus erysipelas, with changes in quantity of drugs used to suit the case in hand, and in some cases I add Sp. veratrum vir. in proportion of zi to the zi of water for local applications; with the above treatment my erysipelas cases soon recover.

In puerperal eclampsia I have administered Sp. veratrum vir. hypodermically on two occasions, in twenty minum doses every half-hour till three doses were given, when all symptoms of spasm had passed, then gave internally in smaller doses.

In each of the above named cases a midwife was in attendance at the time of delivery, and I was called after the convulsions came on. In the first case spasm came on at the time of delivery, and by the time I reached the patient, about an hour and half later, she had passed through six hard convulsions, and before I had had time to administer a hypodermic a seventh seizure came on which lasted about three minutes. As soon as the spasm was off I gave my first treatment as above named, repeating at intervals of thirty minutes until the third treatment was given. The veratrum was continued in smaller doses for several days, at intervals of one or two hours, and there was no return of the trouble, although the patient says it all seems as but a dream. This was a primipara.

In the second above mentioned case spasms came on about twenty-four hours after delivery, when all seemed doing well, as this was the patient's third confinement. The patient was in bed, reclining on one elbow and taking some nourishment when suddenly she complained of a pain in the top of her head, followed by sudden blindness. I was summoned, and after my arrival a hard convulsion came on, opisthotonos being marked. I administered veratrum as in the case above described, and after the third dose the pulse ran down to 68, and there was no more spasm for about thirty hours, when a second seizure came on. Again I administered the same treatment with like results as before,

and in from 24 to 30 hours the third and last attack came on, when two doses did the work, formerly requiring three. In eight hours after the first convulsion the lochial secretion stopped, and I gave internally—

 R. Sp. veratrum vir.
 3i.

 Sp. dulcamara
 3iv.

 Aqu gs. ad.
 3iv.

M Sig. Teaspoonful every two hours,

In about forty-eight hours the secretion was partially established, and in about seventy-two hours from the time blindness came on sight began slowly to return, but it was several days before the patient could distinguish between a man and a woman by sight. The patient cannot remember anything that occurred from the time she took sick until her babe was about two week's old; both mother and child have enjoyed good health since.

In September, 1901, John R. aged 26 years, a strong robust miner, who was employed on one of the gold dredgers being operated on the Feather River, came to me for treatment for a "sore arm," as he expressed it. On examination I found the basilic vein of the right arm inflamed and badly swollen; to the touch it felt as though a section of a lead pencil was incased in the vein, for a span about six inches in length, and about midway from the axilla to the elbow it appeared about ready to break and suppurate. Patient's temperature was 102° with a full strong pulse. Prescribed;

 R Sp. veratrum
 388.

 Echafolta
 3i.

 Aqua chloroforma
 ad. q. s. ziv.

M Sig. Teaspoonful every hour till fever goes down, then every two hours. Also,

M Sig. Apply to arm on absorbent cotton enough to

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On several occasions in the past the application of pure carbolic acid has been recommended in the treatment of burns. In view of the active escharotic properties of this substance the idea has never appeared to commend itself for adoption, but of late its use has again been advocated by practitioners in various parts of the world. Among recent advocates of the treatment Dr. Muench, of Washington, asserts that the application of the pure acid brings about healing much more rapidly than any other method of treatment. It also presents the advantages of suppressing the pain associated with this form of traumatism, in virtue of its analgesic action. Dr. Muench states that the acid coagulates the serous exudation, forming an impermeable layer which effectually protects the injured surface from contact with the air, thus fulfilling one of the most important indications in the treatment of burns He has employed this treatment of burns of considerable extent without ever having observed symptoms of absorption or the undue formation of cicatricial tissue. In the face of this evidence it must be conceded that the application of the pure acid is, at any rate, devoid of injurious consequences, and we commend it to the notice of our readers who have much experience in this class of injury. -Ibid.

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When comedones are present in large numbers, and the skin is thick and grayish, with little suppuration, thorough scraping with a dull currette is of the greatest service. The skin should first be thoroughly disinfected and, after the operation, washed with very hot water and soap. Sulphurcamphor-balsam-of-Peru soap is one of the best. At home the patient may apply a mild sulphur cream or powdered sulphur during the night. If there is much suppuration the pustules should be opened with an acne knife under strict antiseptic precautions and their contents evacuated; squeezing without preliminary incision leaves a worse scar than when the knife is used. If there is much hyperkeratosis, and the patient's consent can be obtained, an ointment consisting of resorcin and

zinc paste, equal parts, may be applied constantly to the skin for four days. At the end of this time the skin is washed with starchy water, and cold cream or glycerin jelly applied. skin peels off in large flakes, bringing away the horny layer, and in a week the improvement is very marked. This treatment is of course temporarily disfiguring, and compels the patient to retire from view for ten days. A novel remedy suggested for cases with excessive oiliness is gasoline; it removes the fatty matters and diminishes the amount of secretion of the sebaceous glands. Electricity may be used either to remove deep-seated papules by the introduction of the needle attached to the negative pole, a weak current being passed for a few seconds, or in the form of surface galvanism, applied fifteen minutes at a time, to stimulate

## FOR SALE

cutaneous circulation in cases characterized by a thick and anæmic skin.

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—Northwestern Medical Journal.

## The Differential Diagnosis of Smallpox and Chicken-pox.

In a letter addressed to a contemporary, Dr. G. S. Perkins calls attention to a simple means of distinguishing chicking-pox from smallpox which deserves to be more widely known. He points out that the vesicles in chickenpox are unilocular, whilst in smallpox they are multilocular. The practical result of this pathological fact is that if a chicken-pox vesicle be pricked with a needle its contents can be completely evacuated and the cell will collapse, whereas in smallpox if one makes twenty pricks with a needle the vesicle will not collapse, because being multilocular, it is impossible to empty There are, of course, many other points of difference between the two; indeed, smallpox is not likely to be mistaken for the less serious malady

when the practitioner is not alive to the possibility of a mistake in the diagnosis. In smallpox, even in its modified form, varioloid, the initial constitutional symptoms are early and well marked, with a considerable rise of temperature and cerebral disturbance. In smallpox the eruption is most abundant on the face and limbs, whereas in chicken-pox it is most abundant on the trunk and its distribution is more discrete and general. Moreover, in chicken-pox the eruption appears in crops, and not, as in smallpox, within a few hours of the first appearance of papules. Then, too, there is the characteristic fall of temperature on the appearance of the vesicles. An absolutely characteristic feature of chicken-pox is the appearance on the body of vesicles of different degrees of evolution, some being fully matured while others have just made their appearance. In spite of these very distinctive features, cases now and then occur in which even the most experienced may hesitate to formulate a definite opinion. In such cases twenty-four hours' observation will almost invariably clear up the mystery and allow a correct diagnosis.—Medical Press and Circular.

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While climatic treatment counts for a good deal, and should be strenuously insisted upon in every case where its pursuance becomes at all possible, yet along with that course, and of vast importance, is a good digestion. And in those whose circumstances preclude the advantages of the climatic treatment it is especially important that the normal powers of digestion be highly conserved. Loomis says: "When the digestion is bad the case is bad." That is a short, emphatic way of expressing it.

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mind disturbance resulting from a consciouness of the pulmonary conditions.

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Cases of unquestioned tuberculosis can no more be treated by rule than other morbid instances. One must constantly exercise selective judgment, but urging the patient, so far as possible, along well-recognized lines.—The Clinical Review.

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And you'll hear him, if you listen, say this same thing day and night;

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Yes, Maltine! Sure, we have it here, but this is quite 'q. t.'

I have a malt that knocks it out, made 'specially for me."

And if you'd follow this same man to his prescription place

You'd see a mercenary smile light up his shaven face.

And you would want to jolt him and you'd strongly wish you could,

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He has home-made Antikamnia and Caroid of his own,

And Hunyadi Fakos and "phoney" Chloretone,

And Benzothymol that he makes, and Pepto—Mangan too;

Ah! 'tis with these things "just as good" he's robbing me and you,

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To give you rose-red water for good Glyco Thymoline.

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And some cheap doctored stimulant for Mariani Wine,

While with Fellow's Hypophosphites he thinks the doctor should

Have quite refrained from ordering when there's "something just as good."

I wonder if, when life is past and to the skies I go,

To be rewarded for my deeds of virtue here below,

When heaven I ask of Peter there, with cloak of white and hood,

He'll say, "Why heaven's full today, but here's something just as good."— Chicago Clinic and Pure Water Journal.

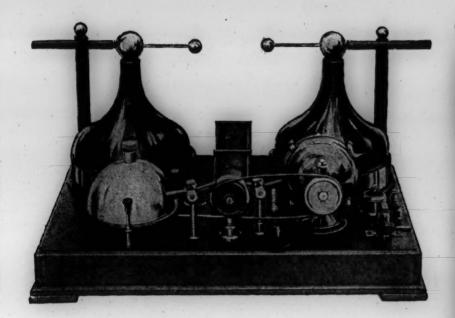
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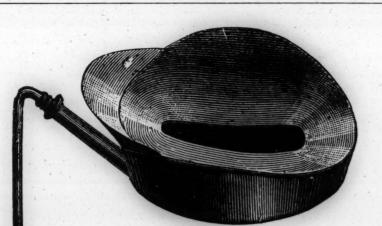
Guesswork in Medicine.

Under this heading, in Merck's Archives of June, there is an editorial that points a lesson well worth remembering. It refers to the instance of a defuded individual who visited five physicians, and got as many different prescriptions for the alleviation of the same train of symptoms detailed to each one. This experience was used as evidence to prove that physicians prescribe by guesswork. But this contention was met in true Lincolnian style with a story, to wit: A hungry man went into six different restaurants and ordered something to eat, which might be anything that would satisfy his hunger. No two restaurants set before him the same food, yet would it not be very illogical to say that the waiters in these instances knew nothing of what constituted food for a hungry man because they did not set before him the same dish? All this goes to show that there are various ways of treating a like train of symptoms, as there are different foods with which to satisfactorily appears hunger.—Med. Council.

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them. Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday. Start out with a clean sheet for today, and write upon it for sweet memory's sake only those things which are lovely, lovable.— Medical Council.

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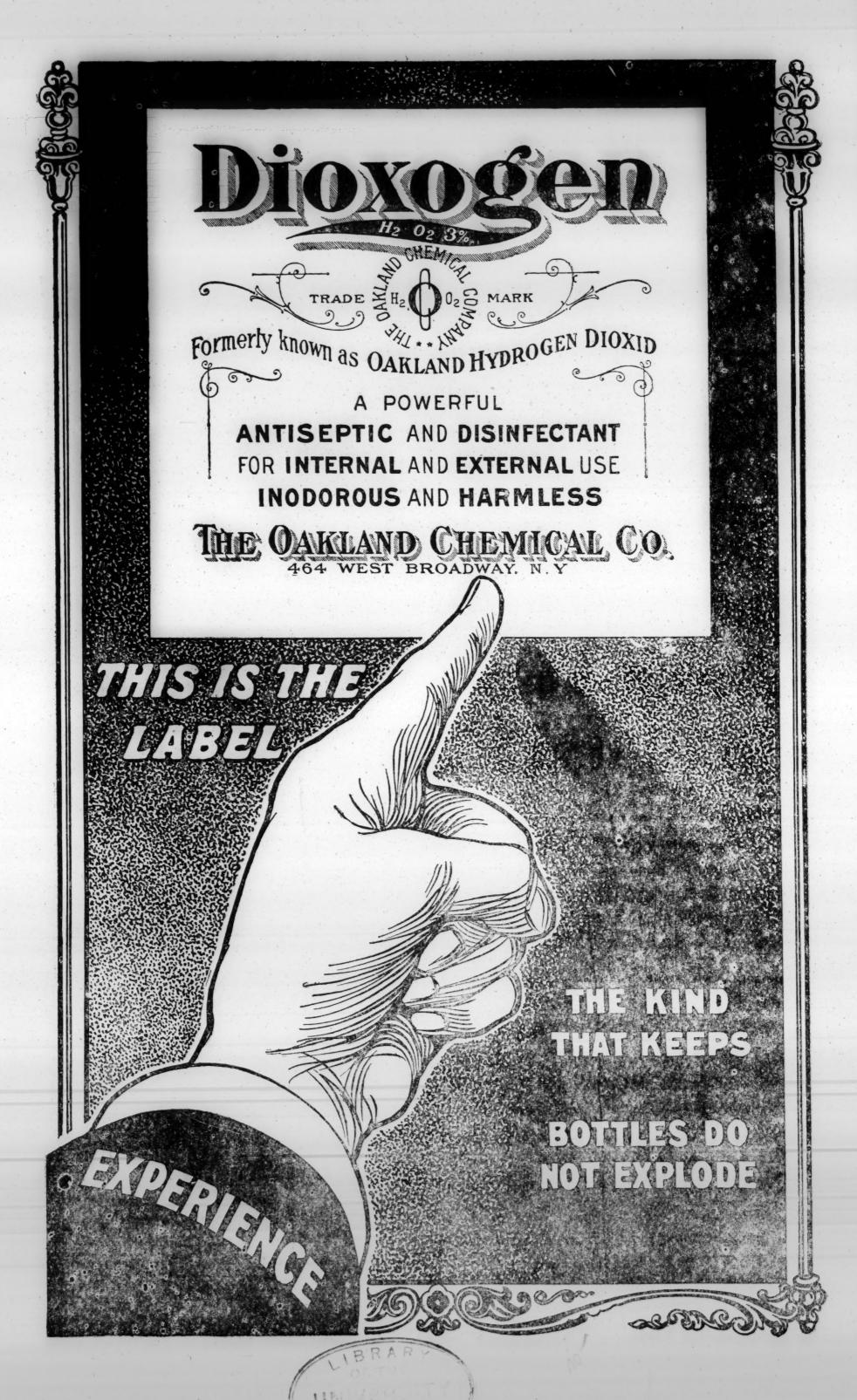
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